

## work environment

Over 22% of the queer participants surveyed said they knew that neither sexual orientation nor gender identity were included in their workplace employment non-discrimination policies. Still nearly 30% said that they did work for an employer who had included at least sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policies.

Unfortunately in the face of state laws that do not prohibit employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, well more than half of those responding to the survey said they felt they had been expected to deny or hide their sexual orientation or gender identity at work. In almost 3 out of 5 of those cases, participant's employers had expressly asked them to do so. Almost a quarter of those surveyed said they thought they had been fired

**i was harassed for or asked to deny or hide that i'm lgbt at my work**



from a job, not been promoted or not received compensation or a raise as a result of anti-gay attitudes in their workplace. 16.3% of the transgender participants, 12% of the gay and bisexual men and 7.6% of the lesbians and bisexual women surveyed said their employer had actually stated that they had been denied a job, a raise, promotion or other compensation expressly because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

In describing their work environment only transgender participants described it as markedly more negative than other participants. In describing specifically their relationships with their employers, straight women tended to be the most positive, with transgender participants again having the most negative experiences.

## safety & violence

It is evident that Idaho is not yet a safe place for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender

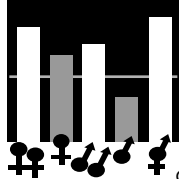
people to live and participate fully in community activities. Over 55% of gay and bisexual men and transgender participants said someone had threatened to do physical violence to them, their partner, child, other family member or pet because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. 24% of lesbians and bisexual women reported such threats.

The numbers are staggering when it comes to verbal harassment with 86% of gay men, 81% of transgender participants and 72% of lesbian and bisexual women reporting that they had been harassed by someone using homophobic or antagonistic slurs, gestures or name calling that indicated that they thought or knew the person was transgender or gay.

## being queer in Idaho

Living in Idaho takes its toll on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. The straight men surveyed were by far most likely to feel positive about themselves with only 16 percent describing themselves with any negative feelings. At least 28% of those in every other group described their feelings about themselves as either slightly negative, negative or very negative. Very disturbing was the 43% percent of all transgender participants who described their feelings about themselves in negative terms. In fact almost 34% of the transgender individuals surveyed said they had attempted suicide at some point in their lives. Overall more

**i'd describe my feelings about myself as negative**



than 33% of the queer participants had attempted suicide compared to 17% for straight women and only 12% for straight men. This data may be very disturbing to many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Idahoans. Many may see this data and feel less alone. In any case, it is evident that Idaho faces huge challenges in making its schools, workplaces and streets from Sandpoint to Idaho Falls safe for LGBT Idahoans. Our community hopes you will be part of making this positive change.



# REPORT on the 2003 Idaho lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Survey

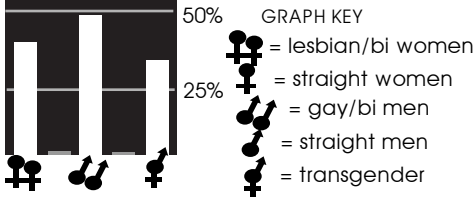
- community acceptance
- harassment
- discrimination
- violence
- school environment
- family relationships

For more information on this report contact survey field director Nicole LeFavour 208 724 0468 [lgbsurvey@4idaho.org](mailto:lgbsurvey@4idaho.org) For tobacco related data contact survey co-author Joseph Pollard with the Idaho Tobacco Prevention Program 332-7302.

The Idaho LGBT Survey was an **anonymous** survey conducted in the winter and spring of 2003 by Idaho's LGBT Community with a CDC grant housed with United Vision for Idaho. More than 2000 Idaho gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual community members participated. Over 1700 valid paper surveys were collected in 29 of Idaho's 44 Counties. More than 300 online surveys were also collected and that data will be included in future reports. Other reports address smoking related issues specifically. This report is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of beginning to examine the survey's information about the lives, stresses, supports and nature of the experience of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Idaho.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this survey possible.

**i'd feel unsafe or at risk of violence holding hands with a same gender partner or being out about my gender at restaurants in my town**



**Who we are**

The Idaho lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender survey project traveled the state in the winter and spring of 2003 to examine the experience and attitudes of over 600 Idaho lesbian and bisexual women, 440 gay and bisexual men, and 72 transgender individuals. 355 heterosexual (straight) women and 235 heterosexual (straight) men also answered the very long paper survey in coffee houses and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community events, on college campuses, in organizational offices, in bars, at homes, in parks, at LGBT friendly businesses, meetings, women's sports events and LGBT social groups in 29 of Idaho's 44 counties. A vast majority of the surveys were collected in Ada County with Latah, Canyon and Twin Falls Counties also well represented.

Even by the most conservative estimates, Idaho has over 13,000 gay and lesbian residents or 1% of the 1.36 million who live in the state. Other estimates put Idaho's LGBT population closer to 10% or over 130,000 individuals.

**age** Those represented in this survey are likely to be younger than the state's LGBT or queer population since roughly only 1% of the 1115 queer individuals surveyed were 65 or older. While the state's older LGBT population is likely to be more invisible and less "out" than younger LGBT folks, older individuals are also far less likely to have been represented at many of the events where surveys were given. Overall, the survey had more than 200 participants in every age category except the 65 and

older category. Additionally only 252 or 23% of those surveyed were over 45.

**race** Of the 1115 queer individuals we surveyed, roughly 10% identified as members of a community of color, either Black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or American Indian. Roughly half of these identified as Latino/Hispanic.

**education** 3% did not complete high school (compared to 4% of the straight participants we surveyed.) 65% of us had attended college with 41% having graduated or completed 4 years of study.

**income** The straight men who participated in the survey tended to fall most often into the highest income bracket. 18% earn more than \$75,000 in yearly house hold income. At the same time roughly only 9% of straight women and transgender participants had incomes above \$75,000 and yet these two groups were more than twice as likely to fall in to the lowest income bracket earning less than \$10,000 a year. This might suggest that gender expression is a powerful force in the upper levels of career advancement and economic status.

**parenting** 20% or 205 of the 1021 queer participants questioned said they had one or more child living in the house. 34% of the lesbian and bisexual women had children living with them.

**family support** Many LGBT people face huge obstacles in coming out and trying not to lose the support of their families after they do. The negative reactions of families put youth at risk and destroy the support systems that queer people have in place to deal with stress and times of crisis.

The survey asked questions about how we would describe our childhoods or how we would describe our relationships with our parents. Future reports will allow us to look at which individuals came out as youth.

Among the queer people surveyed more than 22% of the lesbians and bisexual women as well as 22% of the transgender participants would

describe their childhoods as negative or very negative compared to roughly 11% of straight women, and both queer and straight men. Only the Queer women had a high percentage of negative and very negative responses when asked to describe their relationships with their parents.

Startlingly 40% or 305 lesbian and bisexual women answered that as children they were sexually molested or assaulted, fondled or touched improperly by an adult. This compared to 24% of the straight women, 32% of the transgender participants, 28% of the gay and bisexual men and 12% of the straight men.

Overall the straight participants had nearly double the number of "Very Positive" responses when asked to describe their childhoods or their relationships with their parents, suggesting that queer people are and have been experiencing family stress and a straining of parental relationships as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity issues.

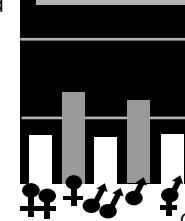
In looking further at our relationships with our parents in terms of our feelings of safety, more than 11% of the queer participants surveyed said they would feel unsafe or at risk of violence were they to openly bring a same gender partner to dinner at their parents home. This is a striking statistic that suggests more than simple tension within families over gay and lesbian issues and the coming out process for many LGBT Idahoans.

**idaho schools & youth** Safety for students in public schools and the nature of the learning environment are very important issues for parents of LGBT youth. The survey found that gay and bisexual men as youth were most likely to have negative experiences and that transgender youth regardless of whether they were out or not were likely to have the most negative experiences in school. A full 44% of those transgender participants surveyed selected the terms "negative" or "very negative" to describe their elementary and secondary school experience.

Why are these experiences so negative? 43% of male gay and bisex-

ual youth experienced LGBT harassment and name calling at school and 32% of these boys experienced at least one threat of physical violence because of their sexual orientation or gender expression. The numbers of incidents for lesbians were lower but still hit 22% for LGBT verbal harassment and 12% for threats of violence. Perhaps not surprisingly 58% of gay and bisexual boys felt it was unsafe to

**i felt safe at my school**



be out at school and only 13% reported that they were out in school at all.

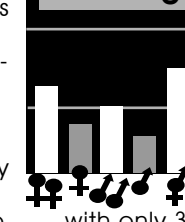
Half of the

survey's queer participants said that their school did not try to make LGBT students feel safe. Less than 11% said that they reported an incident of harassment to school administrators. Interestingly

violence was much more prevalent for male participants and even straight participants reported some incidents of LGBT threats and violence and a great many reported feelings that school was unsafe.

**religion** Roughly 20% of queer women and 25% of queer men said they would feel unsafe or at risk of violence holding hands with a same gender partner in their house of worship. Straight men were more than twice as likely to have positive feelings in describing their relationship with their religion as were queer people. Straight men chose "Not Applicable"

**i'd describe my relationship with my religion as negative**



on the religion question only 20% of the time compared to roughly 25% of the time

for women and queer participants. 40% of queer women and transgender participants appeared to have no current place of worship --compared with only 33% of queer men.